<u>**Amendments to the Claims:**</u>

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

<u>**Listing of Claims:**</u>

1.   (Currently Amended) A method of configuring a load balancer for dispatching client requests amongst a plurality of servers, said method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

for each one of said plurality of servers, creating and storing in a local memory a configuration file containing parameters pertaining to said server to be applied for configuring a load balancing scheme for a plurality of servers that include said server, wherein said parameters comprise session affinity rules and wherein each of said configuration files is accessible to said load balancer;

<u>obtaining</u> ~~reading~~ said parameters from said configuration file for each of said servers, <u>said parameters comprise session affinity rules formatted into markup language supported by the load balancer;</u> and

configuring said load balancer to dispatch client requests to said servers based on an algorithm using said parameters.

2.   (Canceled)

3.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein each of said configuration files has a file path and name in accordance with a standard file path and naming protocol.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein said parameters comprise at least a health URL and content-based routing rules.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein said content-based routing rules comprise a URL mask.

2

6.   (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein said parameters further comprise time-of-day rules.

7.   (Canceled)

8.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of servers comprise a server farm coupled to receive client requests via the Internet.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said configuration file are HTML files.

10.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable product embodied on computer readable media readable by a computing device for configuring a scheme for balancing the servicing of client requests among a plurality of servers, said computer readable product comprising computer executable instructions for:

computer readable program code configured to obtain reading from a configuration file, stored locally at each of said servers, parameters pertaining to said server relevant to configuring a load balancing scheme for a plurality of servers, including each said server; said parameters comprising session affinity rules formatted into markup language supported by the load balancer; and

computer readable program code configured to configure configuring said load balancer to dispatch client requests among said servers based on an algorithm using said parameters.

11.   (Original) The product of claim 10 wherein each of said configuration files has a file path and name in accordance with a standard file path and naming protocol.

12.   (Currently Amended) A computing apparatus for performing load balancing of client requests among a plurality of servers, said apparatus comprising:

means for interfacing to a network to receive client requests directed to one of said plurality of servers via said network;

means for obtaining ~~reading~~ from a configuration file, stored locally at each of said servers, parameters pertaining to said server relevant to configuring a load balancing scheme for a plurality of servers, including each said server; said parameters comprising session affinity rules formatted into markup language supported by the load balancer;

means for configuring said load balancer to dispatch client requests to said servers based on an algorithm using said parameters; and

means for dispatching requests received via said network to said plurality of servers in accordance with said algorithm.